KODANSHA COMICS

CHAPTER 192

KEI SASUGA

CHAPTER 192: THE STATE OF LOVE

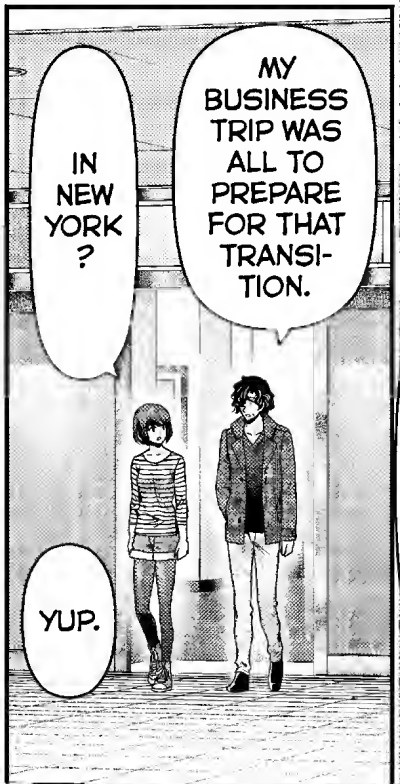
KEI SASUGA

APPARENTLY, ONE OF THE HOTEL'S RESTAURANT CONSULTANTS HAS BEEN COMING IN REGULARLY SINCE SUMMER.
I GUESS HE HEARD OUR VICHYSSOISE AND SUMMER PASTA WERE GOOD AND DECIDED TO CHECK US OUT...

I ASKED MYSELF THE SAME THING!
"WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH A TINY JOINT LIKE OURS?!"
THAT SUPER RITZY HOTEL? WHY US?!
WHAT...? THE COLTON TOKYO?!

OH...
SO, WHY THE OVERSEAS TRAINING?

I DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO PAY OFF LIKE *THIS*, THOUGH.
HEH HEH.
THAT'S GREAT! SOUNDS LIKE BEING PARTICULAR ABOUT FLAVOR PAID OFF.

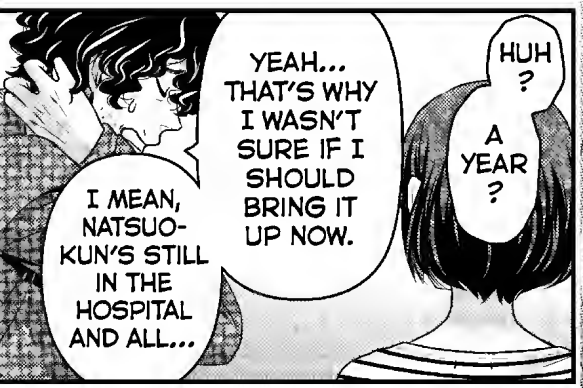

IN NEW YORK?
MY BUSINESS TRIP WAS ALL TO PREPARE FOR THAT TRANSI-TION.
YUP.

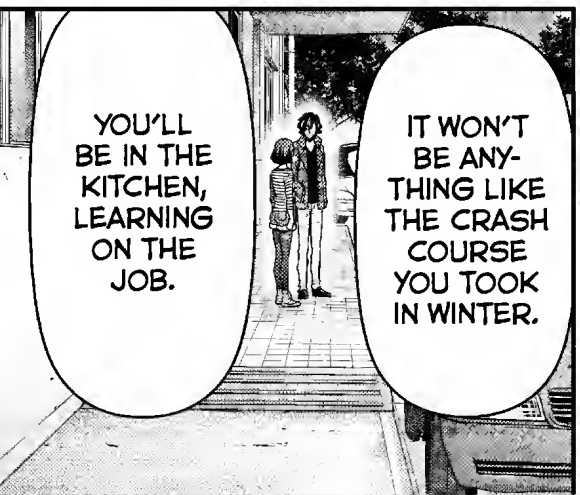
FROM WHAT THE CON-SULTANT TOLD ME,
CLASSY HOTELS WANT THEIR ON-SITE RESTAURANT'S SERVICE TO HAVE A CERTAIN LEVEL OF REFINEMENT.
THE IDEA WOULD BE TO SHOOT FOR A MORE HIGH-GRADE, SOPHISTICATED RESTAURANT THAN THE CASUAL OPERATION WE RUN NOW.

THE CHEF I TRAINED UNDER IN ITALY YEARS AGO IS THE MASTER CHEF AT A HOTEL IN NEW YORK NOW.
I PLAN TO SEND A HANDFUL PEOPLE FROM BOTH BRANCHES THERE TO WORK UNDER HIM.
IF WE'RE AIMING TO RUN A FIRST-CLASS RESTAURANT, I WANT THEM TO LEARN FROM THE BEST.

PASTA?!
I'M SO IN!
HOW LONG WILL I BE GONE?
LIKE TWO WEEKS OR SO?
NO.

THEY'LL BE THE CREW RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HOTEL BRANCH.
WHEN YOU GET BACK, I PLAN TO PUT YOU IN CHARGE OF PASTA, RUI.


HUH?
A YEAR?
YEAH... THAT'S WHY I WASN'T SURE IF I SHOULD BRING IT UP NOW.
I MEAN, NATSUO-KUN'S STILL IN THE HOSPITAL AND ALL...


YOU'LL BE IN THE KITCHEN, LEARNING ON THE JOB.
IT WON'T BE ANY-THING LIKE THE CRASH COURSE YOU TOOK IN WINTER.

IT'LL BE FOR AT LEAST A YEAR.

CAN I...
...HAVE SOME TIME TO THINK IT OVER?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
カラ
RATL
HEY. TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.
HUH?
OH, UM... I WAS TALKING TO DAD ABOUT WORK.
I WAS GETTING ANTSY.
WHAT?
YOU WANNA PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF?

YEAH.
HEY...
DO YOU ...
...WANNA BE WITH ME FOREVER, NATSUO?
WHAT'S UP THIS TIME?
NOTHING, I JUST...
... THOUGHT I'D ASK WHILE WE'RE MAKING OUT.
'ZAT RIGHT ?

NO.
IT'S NOTHING.

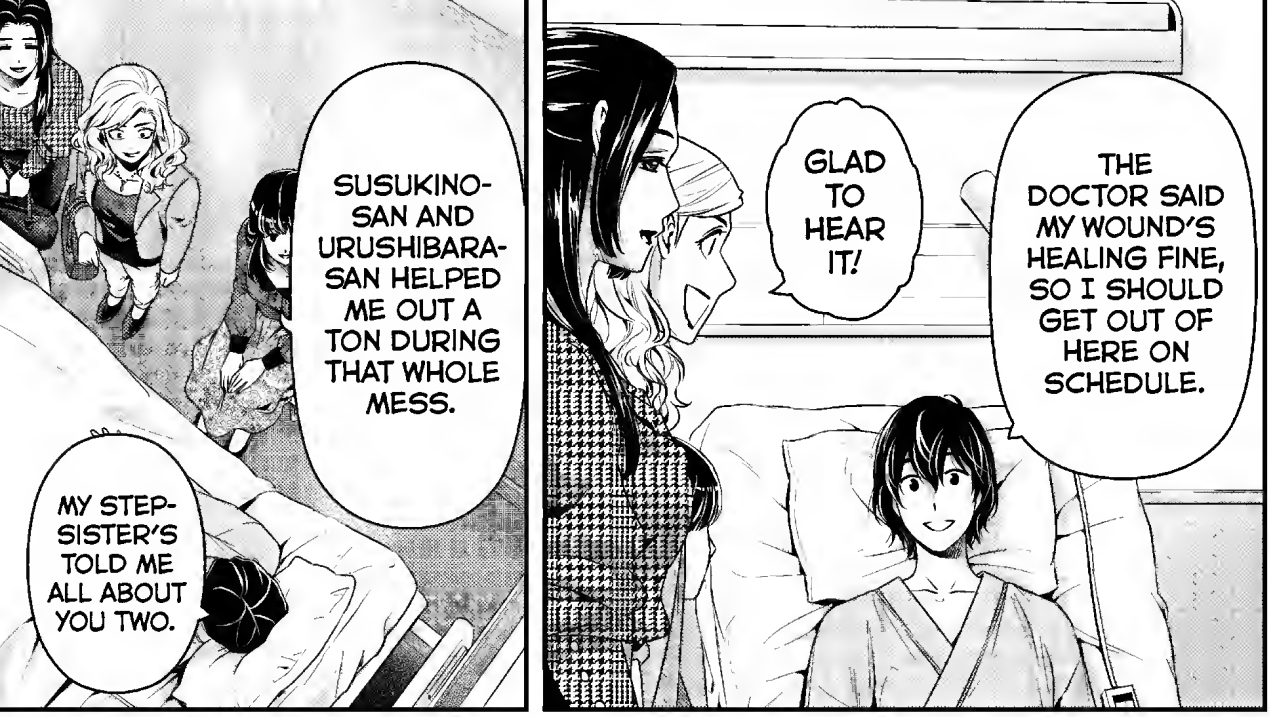
TACHI-
BANA.
DID THE OWNER TELL YOU?
ABOUT THE TRAIN-ING.
OH... YOU, TOO?
YEAH. I GUESS HE ALSO APPROACHED TOCHIDA-SAN, THE *PRIMO PIATTO* CHEF, AND AWAKURA-SAN, INCHARGE OF *DOLCE*.
IS THIS PLACE GONNA BE OKAY IF THAT MANY PEOPLE LEAVE?
HE SAID HE'LL HIRE REPLACE-MENTS.
KAJITA ...
SO?
HAVE YOU GIVEN HIM AN ANSWER YET?

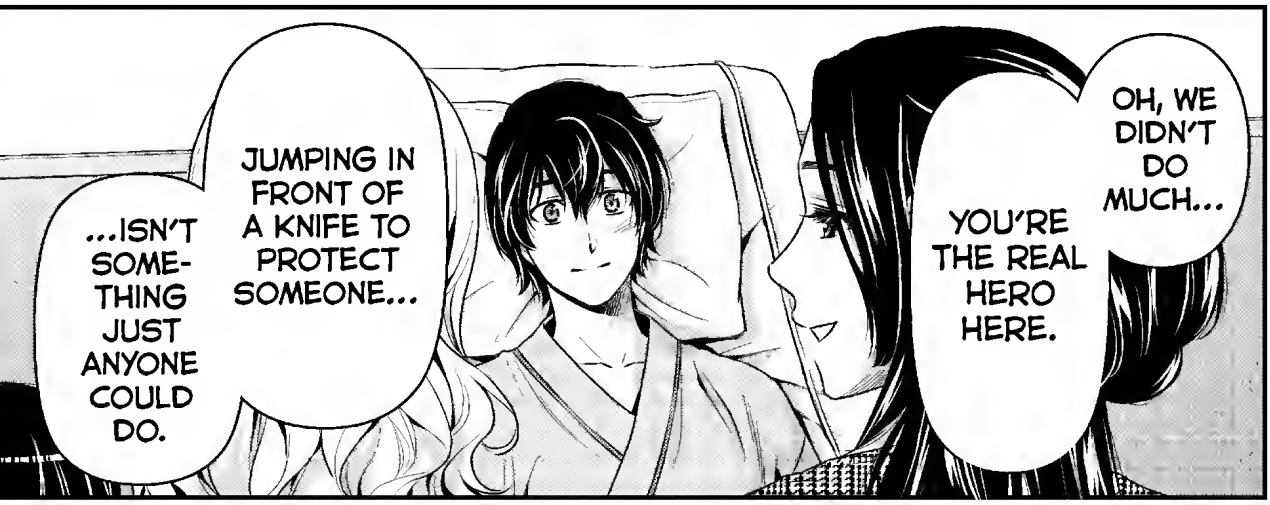
...
NOT YET.
TO BE HONEST, I'M STILL ON THE FENCE...
ON THE FENCE?
WHAT'S THERE TO EVEN HESITATE ABOUT?
I HAVE MY REASONS!
I'M GUESSING YOU'RE GOING THEN?
YUP.

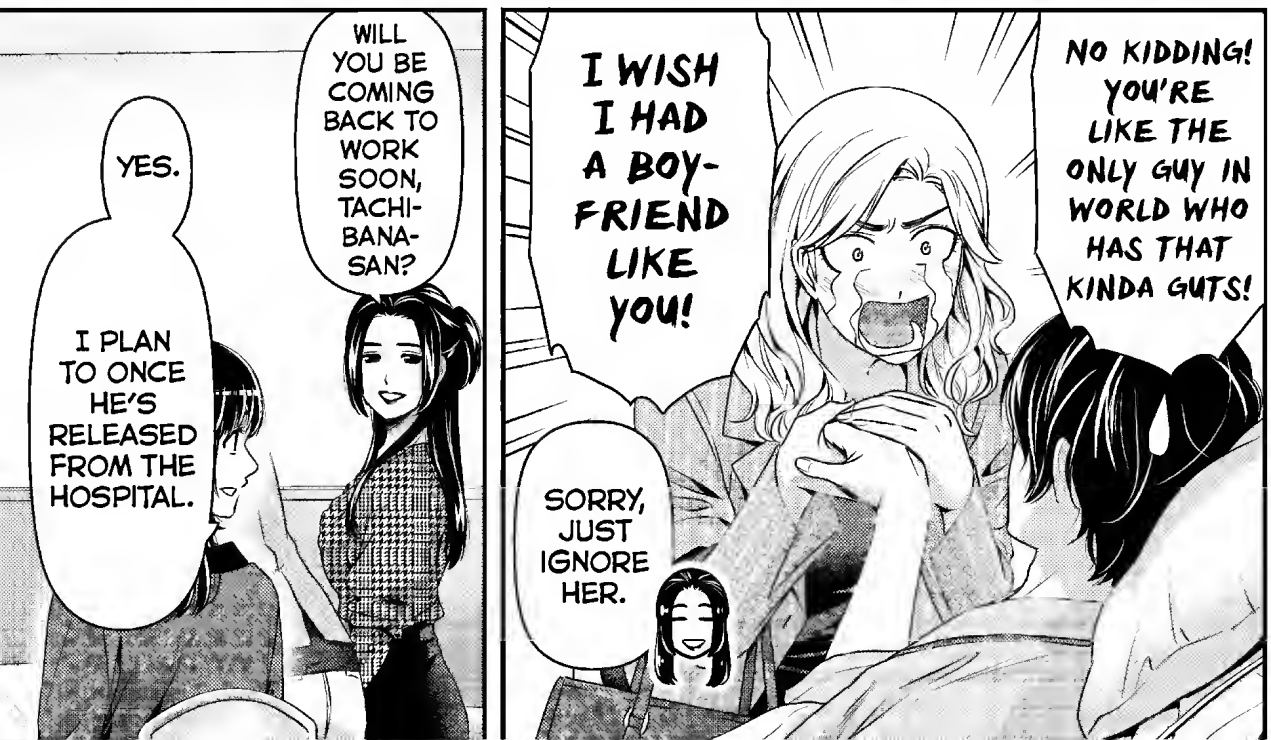
I HEAR THE PAY'S BETTER OVER THERE, EVEN FOR NEWBIES.
I WANNA MAKE AS MUCH AS I CAN TO PUT MY BROTHER AND SISTER THROUGH SCHOOL.
BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY,
I'LL GET TO BETTER MYSELF AS A CHEF.
YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
THIS IS A HUGE OPPORTUNITY.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ACTUALLY SATISFIED WITH MAKING SALAD AND APPETIZERS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
I DUNNO WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK,
BUT I KNOW YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR JOB AND COOKING.
SO...

IF YOU'RE NOT SURE,
THEN JUST COME.
"Luck is in the hole"
LET'S ...
...HONE OUR SKILLS TOGETH-ER.

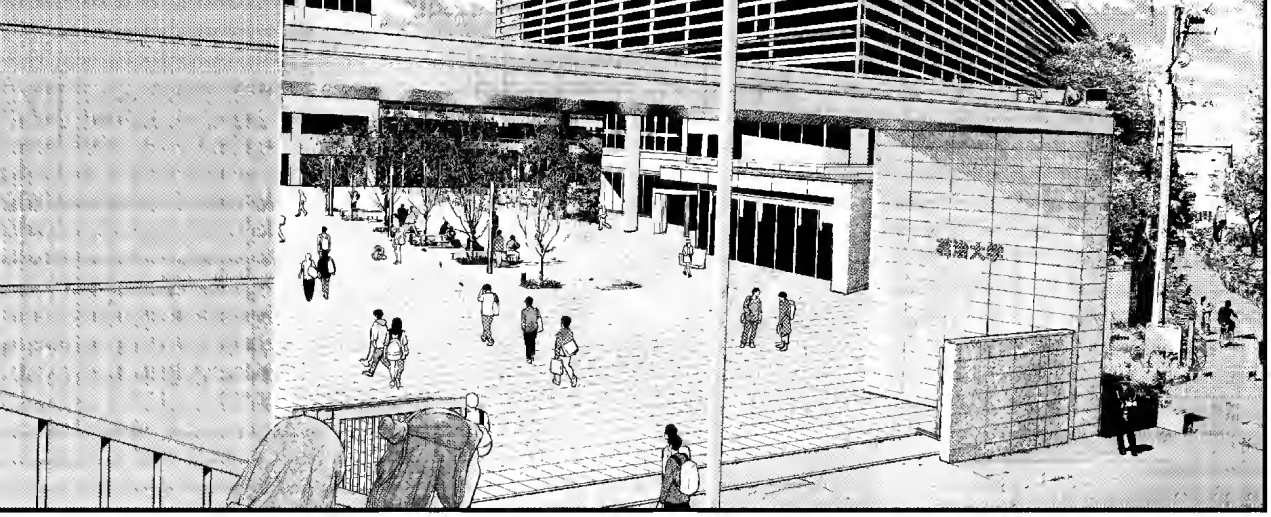
...
THANK GOD YOU CAME BACK TO LIFE!
I ACTUALLY PUMPED MY FIST WHEN I SAW ON THE NEWS THAT YOU REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "CAME BACK TO LIFE"? HE DIDN'T *DIE*, SUSUKINO-SAN.
OH, RIGHT. MY BAD.
YOU'RE LOOKING WELL. HOW'S THE RECOVERY COMING ALONG?
GOOD.

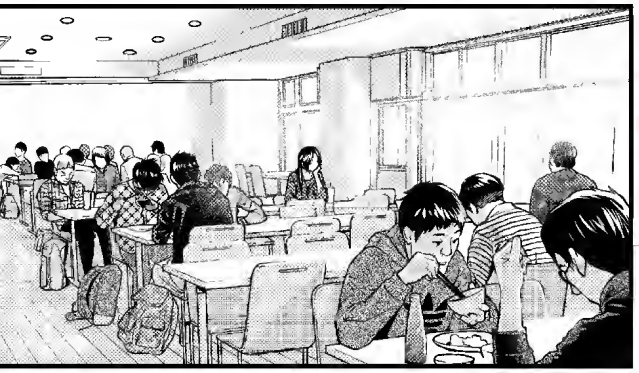

THE DOCTOR SAID MY WOUND'S HEALING FINE, SO I SHOULD GET OUT OF HERE ON SCHEDULE.
GLAD TO HEAR IT!
SUSUKINO-SAN AND URUSHIBARA-SAN HELPED ME OUT A TON DURING THAT WHOLE MESS.
MY STEP-SISTER'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU TWO.

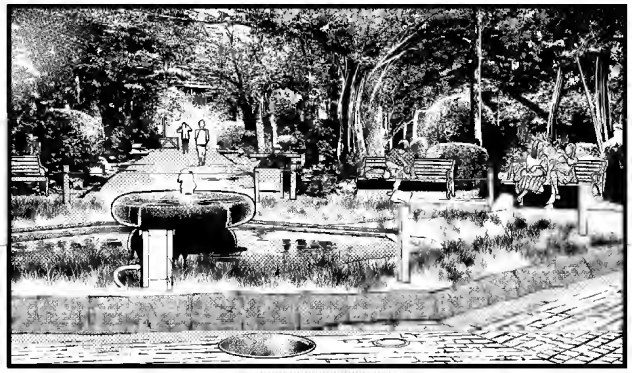

OH, WE DIDN'T DO MUCH...
YOU'RE THE REAL HERO HERE.
JUMPING IN FRONT OF A KNIFE TO PROTECT SOMEONE...
...ISN'T SOME-THING JUST ANYONE COULD DO.

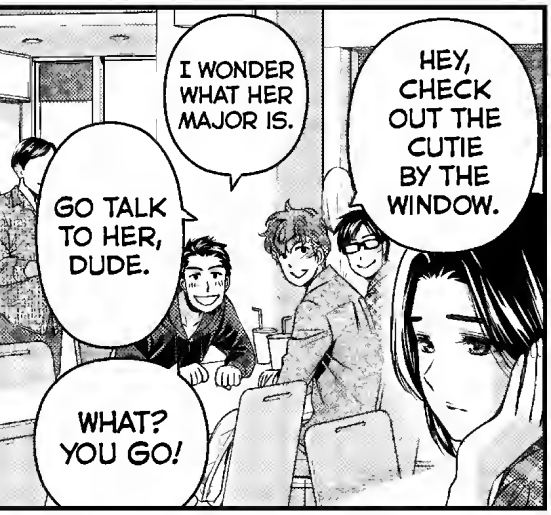

NO KIDDING! YOU'RE LIKE THE ONLY GUY IN WORLD WHO HAS THAT KINDA GUTS!
I WISH I HAD A BOY-FRIEND LIKE YOU!
SORRY, JUST IGNORE HER.
WILL YOU BE COMING BACK TO WORK SOON, TACHI-BANA-SAN?
YES.
I PLAN TO ONCE HE'S RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL.

ER... IT'S COOL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
GETTING RELEASED MEANS I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF AGAIN, ANYWAY.
NO BUTS! I INSIST!
OH, BUT, EVEN AFTER I GO BACK TO WORK...
...I'LL STILL MAKE TIME TO HELP YOU OUT AROUND THE HOUSE AND STUFF,
SO DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT A THING.
SO...
YOU NEED TO TAKE IT EASY FOR A WHILE AFTER YOU GET OUT.
YOU HEARD THE DOCTOR.
SHE'S RIGHT. YOU SHOULD LET YOUR BIG SISTER SPOIL YOU WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE.
SHE MIGHT BUY YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT IF YOU PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT!
THAT'S BASICALLY EXTORTION ...
...I'M GONNA START TAKING COOKING LESSONS...
...AND HELP NURSE YOU BACK TO HEALTH WITH A BALANCED DIET!
NOW I'M REALLY WORRIED!


SIGN: MEIJI UNIVERSITY






I WONDER WHAT HER MAJOR IS.
HEY, CHECK OUT THE CUTIE BY THE WINDOW.
GO TALK TO HER, DUDE.
WHAT? YOU GO!

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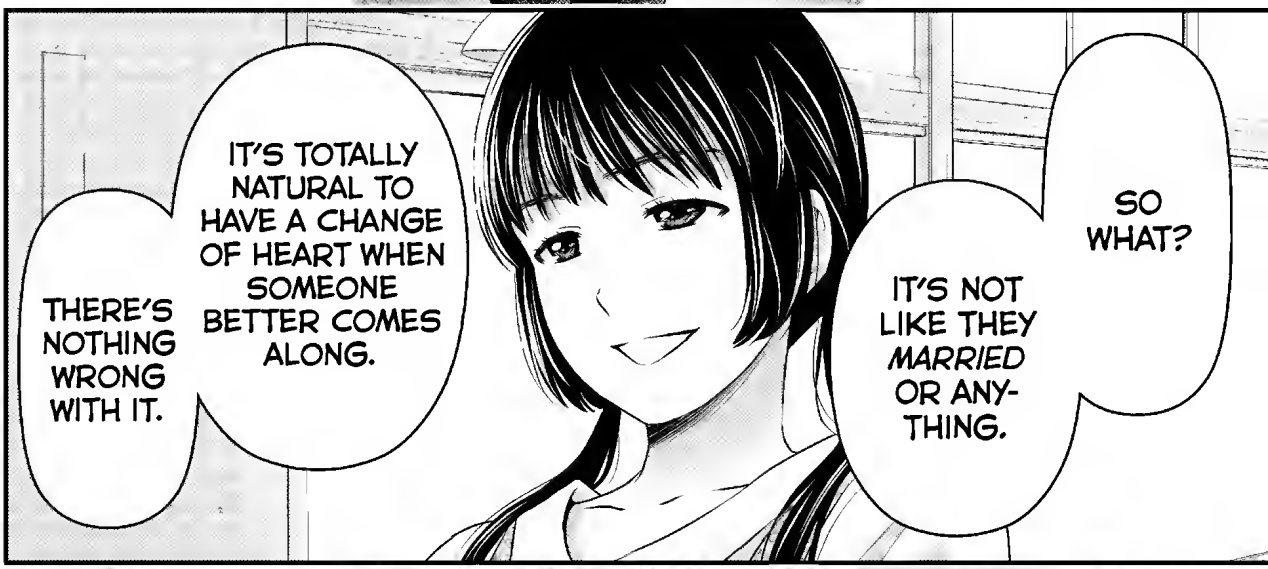
IT'S BASICALLY JUST IMPROV.
I HAVE NO PROBLEM BEING THOUGHTFUL AND WITTY WHEN I'M ACTING.
AND YET ...
WHY DOES IT...
...ALWAYS TURN OUT LIKE THAT?
WHAT'S WITH THE HUGE SIGH?
...AND MAKE MYSELF LOOK LIKE A SPAZ?!
...WHY DO I ALWAYS FALL APART IN FRONT OF FUJII-KUN...
I JUST WANT TO LOOK GOOD FOR HIM...

...!
AAAAH!
WHAT AM I DAY-DREAMING ABOUT?!
WHIP WHIP WHIP
SLOW DOWN, GIRL!
I THINK WE DODGED A BULLET.
YEAH - ...
BESIDES, FUJII-KUN ALREADY HAS A GIRL-FRIEND.
IT'S RUDE TO HARBOR THESE KINDS OF FEELINGS FOR HIM.
HEY, NETTY. HOW'D IT GO WITH THAT GUY?

IS THAT NICK-NAME SERI-OUSLY STICK-ING?
WELL, IT'S PERFECT FOR YOU. SLUTTY NENE, NETTY.
RUDE... BUT AT LEAST IT SOUNDS CUTE.
I GUESS IT'S OKAY THEN.
YOU MEAN OKAZAKI-KUN?
WE HAD SEX A FEW TIMES,
BUT I KINDA HAD MY FILL, SO I DELETED HIM FROM LINE.
GOD, WHAT A BITCH.
I HAVE MY EYE ON HATANAKA-KUN NOW.
HUH? DOESN'T HE HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND?


SO WHAT?
IT'S NOT LIKE THEY *MARRIED* OR ANY-THING.
IT'S TOTALLY NATURAL TO HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART WHEN SOMEONE BETTER COMES ALONG.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT.

...
THE FACT THAT YOU CAN SAY THAT *AND* ALWAYS CATCH YOUR PREY IS WHAT'S REALLY IMPRESSIVE.
THROW ENOUGH MUD AT THE WALL AND SOME OF IT WILL STICK.
I THINK YOU THROW A LITTLE *TOO* MUCH.

MAYBE YOU NEED TO LOWER YOUR STANDARDS.
BE RIGHT BACK. BATHROOM.
GONNA PULL SOMEONE INTO THE STALL FOR A QUICKIE?
UGH, SHUT UP.
KUZUOKA-SAN!
SERIZAWA-SAN?
UM... I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.
WILL YOU ...
...TEACH ME HOW TO SEDUCE MEN?

AH HA HA HA!
ぷっ
ぷっ
!
I'M SERIO–
NK
ハッ
ハッ
THUD
バタン!!
YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
UM... THAT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE A JOKE.
HEE
HEE
HEE
...WHILE I'M PLAIN, BUT GUYS CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF ME.
WHY YOU'RE PRETTY, YET STUCK SINGLE ...